

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in the present application. By this Reply, new claims 17-20 have been added.

Allowable Subject Matter and New Claims

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 3, 7, 9-11, and 13 are objected to, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim.

Accordingly, allowable claims 7, 11, and 13 have be rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim and thus, should be allowable over the prior art of record.

New claims 17-20 depend from now allowable claims 7, 11, and 13, respectively, and thus are allowable over the prior art of record.

Accordingly, indication of allowance of claims 7, 9-11, 13, and 17-20 is deemed prior and is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection

Claims 1, 4-5, 6, 8, 14, and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ikemure (U.S Patent No. 5,502,777) in view of Abe (U.S Patent No. 5,129,012). This rejection, insofar as it pertains to the presently pending claims, is respectfully traversed.

The primary reference, Ikemure, applied by the Examiner is directed to a method for detecting a table in a scan image. In Ikemure, after producing a binary-valued image of a tile table, the method starts with detecting a rectangle circumscribed about the group of black pixels. Subsequently within this area, lateral lines and longitudinal lines are extracted. Pixels are then

counted for all of the whole lines and pixels are counted for all of the line parts placed in the inside area of the circumscribed rectangle. The ratio of these counts is used as an indication of a table. In Ikemure, the density of lines is not related to this ratio.

The secondary reference, Abe, applied by the Examiner is directed to detecting line segments from the scanned picture data of an optically scanned document by examining line elements in the scanned picture data.

However, neither Ikemure nor Abe teaches or suggests using a plurality of crops of a document where at least one crop corresponds to a corner of the document, as required by independent claim 1, whereby a table in the document can be automatically located as discussed in Applicants' embodied invention. For example, in Applicants' embodied invention, one or more crops each corresponding to a corner of the document is analyzed to locate a table or the like in a document. See, e.g., page 7, lines 3-8; page 7, line 34 - page 8, line 5 of the present specification. This feature is clearly absent from Ikemure and Abe, as generally recognized by the Examiner by the indication of allowability of claim 3.

In the alternative, applying the method of Ikemure to a document such as a technical drawing, as recited in claim 2, to identify the location of a table would not work. A technical drawing has numerous lateral and longitudinal lines. So numerous rectangles circumscribing a group of black pixels would be available in Ikemure, which would render the pixel counting operation of Ikemure ineffective.

Accordingly, the invention as recited in independent claim 1 and its dependent claims (due to the dependency) is patentable over the applied references, and the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

Claim 12 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ikemure and Abe as applied to claims 1, 4-5, 6, 8, 14, and 16 above, and further in view of Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 6,055,036). Claim 15 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being

unpatentable over Ikemure and Abe as applied to claims 1, 4-6, 8, 14, and 16 above, and further in view of Casey et al. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, independent claim 1 from which claims 12 and 15 depend is allowable over the combination of Ikemure and Abe. Further, Takahashi or Casey et al. does not overcome the deficiencies in the combination of Ikemure and Abe. Thus, claims 12 and 15 are allowable as being dependent on claim 1. Accordingly, the rejections are improper and should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons and in view of the above clarifying amendments, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw all of the objections and rejections of record, and to provide an early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

Should there be any outstanding matters which need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Esther H. Chong (Registration No. 40,953) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Application No. 10/079,513
Amendment dated January 4, 2006
Reply to Office Action of October 4, 2005

Docket No.: 0142-0380P

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and further replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees. In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Dated: January 4, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By *Esther H. Chong* #40,953
Raymond C. Stewart
Registration No.: 21,066
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP
8110 Gatehouse Road
Suite 100 East
P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000
Attorney for Applicant